



Bethel

Discipleship Series

THE WORD OF GOD

I. THE AMAZING BOOK

- A. No book in the world is more amazing or more powerful than the Word of God, the Bible. Even as a work of literature, it has no parallel.

“It is impossible to righteously govern the world without God and the Bible.”

– George Washington, first U.S. President.

“I believe that the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated to us through the book.” – Abraham Lincoln, U.S. President.

“If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury our glory in profound obscurity.” – Daniel Webster, Preeminent American Spokesman and Legislator

“That Book, Sir, is the rock on which our Republic stands.” – Andrew Jackson, U.S. President.

“Indeed, it is an indisputable fact that all the complex and horrendous questions confronting us at home and worldwide have their answer in that single book.” – Ronald Reagan, U.S. President.

II. WHY IS THE BIBLE IMPORTANT?

- A. Although great men have extolled the importance of the Bible, it does not receive its value from the praise of men. The Bible is important because it is the pure, absolute Word of God.

1. While it was physically penned by human beings, every word was written under God's divine inspiration, anointing, and direction.
 - **2 Peter 1:20-21** – *“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”*
 - **2 Timothy 3:16** – *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”*

- B. The Bible is important because it is absolute truth – it is reliable and dependable. We can have total confidence and trust in the truth of the Word of God.

- **Psalm 119:160** – *“Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.”*
- **1 Thessalonians 2:13** – *“...when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”*

SCRIPTURE TEXTS:

Luke 4:4 – *“And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.”*

2 Timothy 2:15 – *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*

2 Timothy 3:16-17 – *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”*

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- C. The Bible is important because it is unchanging, eternal and everlasting.
- **Psalm 119:89** – “For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.”
 - **Isaiah 40:8** – “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”
 - **Matthew 24:35** – (Jesus said) “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”
 - **1 Peter 1:25** – “But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”
- D. The Bible is important because it gives us answers and instructions for the issues of life:
1. It tells of mankind’s need for a savior.
 - **Romans 5:12** – “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”
 2. It reveals God’s love for the lost world.
 - **John 3:16** – “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
 3. It portrays God’s plan for saving the world.
 - **John 3:5** – “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”
 4. It imparts God’s instructions on how we should live.
 - **Colossians 3:16** – “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

III. SOME FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

- The word “Bible” comes from the Greek word “*biblos*” which means book. It was the name given to the pulp of the papyrus reed upon which ancient books were written.
 - The plural form of *biblos* is *biblia*, and by the second century AD, Christians were using the word *biblia* to describe the Holy Scriptures.
 - The Old Testament was written primarily in Hebrew.
 - The New Testament was written primarily in Greek.
 - Cardinal Hugo divided the Bible into chapters in 1250 AD.
 - The first printing press was invented in 1450 AD and the Bible was the first book ever printed. Before that time, Bibles were copied by hand.
 - Sir Robert Stephens divided the Bible into verses in 1551 AD.
 - The King James Bible is divided into 66 books, 1,189 chapters, and 31,214 verses, made up of 773,746 words and 3,566,480 letters.
 - Psalm 119 is the longest chapter.
 - Psalm 117 is the shortest chapter.
 - Esther 8:9 is the longest verse.
 - John 11:35 is the shortest verse.
 - There are roughly 1,250 promises in the Bible given to people in various time periods; approximately 500 of those promises can be claimed by believers today.
- A. The Bible was penned by 40 dissimilar men writing on three different continents (Africa, Asia, and Europe) over a span of 1500 years.

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- *Moses* – a prince, educated in the universities of Egypt
- *Peter* – a fisherman
- *Amos and David* – humble herdsmen
- *Joshua* – a military general
- *Luke* – a doctor
- *Solomon* – a king
- *Matthew* – a tax collector
- *Paul* – a rabbi

B. The Bible was written in different locations

- *Moses wrote in the wilderness.*
- *Jeremiah wrote in a dungeon.*
- *Daniel wrote from hillsides and in a palace.*
- *Paul wrote in prison.*
- *Luke wrote while traveling.*
- *John wrote while in exile on the island of Patmos.*
- *David wrote during the rigors of military campaigns.*

C. In spite of the diversity of its writers (their backgrounds, education, and life experiences) the Bible is uniquely harmonious in its unity and agreement. It speaks with “one voice.”

D. The books of the Bible are arranged by subject – they are not arranged in chronological order.

OLD TESTAMENT (39 Books)

TORAH BOOKS OF MOSES (5 books)	HISTORY (12 books)	POETRY (5 books)	MAJOR PROPHETS (5 books)	MINOR PROPHETS (12 books)
Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Joshua Judges Ruth 1 & 2 Samuel 1 & 2 Kings 1 & 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther	Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel	Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi

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NEW TESTAMENT (27 Books)			
GOSPELS LIFE OF JESUS (4 books)	HISTORY (1 book)	EPISTLES (LETTERS) (21 books)	PROPHECY (1 book)
Matthew Mark Luke John	Acts (of the Apostles)	Romans 1 & 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 & 2 Thessalonians 1 & 2 Timothy Titus Philemon Hebrews James 1 & 2 Peter 1, 2 & 3 John Jude	Revelation

- E. There is astounding prophetic evidence that supports the Bible.
- *More than 300 Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah were fulfilled by the life of Jesus Christ. Prophecies concerning world events, most notably, events in the Middle East, have been fulfilled in recent history – some coming to pass even in our lifetime.*
- F. In spite of this amazing evidence, we do not depend upon external, outward sources to prove the Word of God. The Bible remains true regardless of attacks, criticisms or denunciations leveled against it by skeptics and critics. Attacks will come and go, but God’s Word will stand forever.

IV. THE DIVINE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE

- **2 Timothy 3:16** – “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”
- A. The word “*inspiration*” is translated from the Greek word “*theopneustos*” which literally means “*God-breathed*.” It has the connotation of “imparting life,” much the same as when God breathed life into Adam in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:7).
1. The word “*inspiration*” means that the writings are the result of a definite and certain influence of God exerted on the actual inscribers. The Word of God is the declaration of God’s thoughts, His will, His desires, and His being.
 - **2 Peter 1:20-21** – “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”
 2. The word “*moved*” is translated from the Greek word “*phero*” which literally means “bear along, carry, move out of position, drive, impel.” God’s Spirit moved and compelled (inspired) the ancient scribes to write His divine wisdom, will and instruction as He dictated it to them. They were not writing their words, they were writing God’s words.

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B. John tells us that the Word of God became flesh in the form of Jesus Christ.

- **John 1:1, 14** – *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.*

C. Jesus Himself testified of the Scriptures.

- **Luke 24:44** – *“And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.”*

D. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament are the divinely inspired Word of God.

- **1 Corinthians 14:37** – *“If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.”*
- **2 Thessalonians 3:14** – *“And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.”*
- **2 Peter 3:2** – *“That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour.”*

V. THE DIVINE PRESERVATION OF SCRIPTURE

A. The Lord insured that His inspired Word would remain intact over time.

B. There is more manuscript evidence for New Testament Scripture than there is for many widely-accepted works of antiquity, e.g., Plato, Sophocles, Aristotle.

C. The Old Testament scribes had the task of copying Scripture.

1. The Lord made it clear that His Word is to be treated properly.

- **Deuteronomy 4:2** – *“Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.”*
- **Proverbs 30:5-6** – *“Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.”*
- **Psalms 12:6-7** – *“The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.”*

2. The scribes took their responsibility very seriously.

From *God Wrote Only One Bible* by Jasper James Ray (1983):

“In making copies of the original manuscripts, the Jewish scribes exercised the greatest possible care. When they wrote the name of God in any form they were to reverently wipe their pen, and wash their whole body before writing “Jehovah” lest that holy name should be tainted even in writing. The new copy was examined and carefully checked with the original almost immediately,

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and it is said that if only one incorrect letter was discovered the whole copy was rejected. Each new copy had to be made from an approved manuscript, written with a special kind of ink, upon skins made from a 'clean' animal. The writer had to pronounce aloud each word before writing it. In no case was the written word to be written from memory."

From *Lectures on Christian Theology* by Enoch Pond (1867)

"They ascertained the middle letter of the Pentateuch, the middle clause and letter of each book, and how many times each letter of the alphabet occurs in all the Hebrew Scriptures. Thus Aleph, they tell us, occurs 42,377 times; Beth, 32,218 times. I mention these facts to show the excessive care and particularity of these ancient copyists, and how unlikely it is that any considerable change could occur under their hands."

VI. THE WORD – A SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL RICHES

- A. *The Bible is a source of power* – it helps us defeat our enemy, Satan. When Jesus was tempted of the devil in the wilderness, He used the Word as His weapon. Three times He defeated Satan's attack by saying, "It is written." He won the victory by quoting scripture to the devil.
- **Matthew 4:10-11** – "Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him."

The writer of Hebrews describes the power of the Word of God.

- **Hebrews 4:12** – "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
- B. *The Bible is a source of great spiritual benefit*. When righteous, obedient people consistently read the Word, they receive tremendous spiritual development and blessing. Psalm 19 recounts some of the ways in which the Word blesses us:
- **Psalm 19:7-11** – "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward."
- C. *The Bible is a source of joy*.
- **Psalm 119:47, 97, 162** – "And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved... O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day... I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil."
 - **Jeremiah 15:16** – "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts."
- D. *The Bible is a source of peace*.
- **Psalm 119:165** – "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.(make them stumble)."

VII. FOUR WAYS IN THE WHICH THE WORD "PROFITS" US

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- **2 Timothy 3:16** – “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”
 - A. The Word of God is profitable in four very specific areas: doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction.
 - B. First, the Word is profitable for doctrine.
 1. Doctrine is a belief, a teaching, a dogma, a creed, a tenet of faith. Doctrine must not be man’s ideas, it must be the teaching of inspired scripture. The Bible teaches us specific doctrines that can be learned through no other source.
 - It teaches us the nature, character, and power of God.
 - It reveals to us our fallen, sinful state.
 - It shows what we must do to be saved and have eternal life.
 - It teaches us how to overcome temptation and sin.
 - It teaches us how to live a holy life that pleases God.
 - It teaches us how to be a part of the church of God
 - It instructs us how to treat other people.
 2. The basis for sound doctrine cannot be man’s philosophy, popular opinion, traditional beliefs or even commonly accepted ideas – the basis for sound doctrine must always be the faithful Word of God.
 - **Titus 1:9** – “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”
 - C. Second, the Word of God is profitable for reproof – reprimand, scolding, censure, admonition.
 1. Sometimes, we imperfect Christians need the chastening or “scolding” of the Lord. We can fail, make mistakes and get out of line. The Word is the main source of God’s reproof and reprimand to us.
 - **Hebrews 12:6-7** – “*For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?*”
 - **Hebrews 12:11** – “*Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*”
 2. When we read the Word or hear the Word preached or taught, it can sometimes “sting” us as it cuts away the things that need to be removed from our hearts and lives.
 3. The reproof and chastising of God’s Word is never for our harm – it is always for our good!
 - **Psalm 94:12** – “*Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law.*”
 - **Revelation 3:19** – “*As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*”
 - D. Third, the Word of God is profitable for correction.

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1. Correction is the next step beyond reproof or chastisement – it means to “mend our ways” or to make something right that was wrong. God corrects us by showing us where we are wrong and guiding us into that which is right.
2. First comes reproof or chastening. Secondly comes repentance. Thirdly, we must change our wrong way and bring it in line with the Word of God.
3. II Kings chapter 22 records the account of the re-discovery of the Word of God under the reign of King Josiah. Read the king’s reaction to what the Lord wrote.
4. Another example of the Word being used in correction is found in 1 Corinthians chapters 11 and 14, where Paul corrects the Corinthians in the appropriate way to observe the Lord’s Supper and the proper use of spiritual gifts.

E. Fourth, the Word of God is profitable for instruction in righteousness.

1. “Instruction in righteousness” means to be tutored or trained in “equity of character” – it means the act of being educated in holiness, godliness, and righteousness.
2. The Bible is the handbook for Christian development – both inward and outward development. It is the manual for our spiritual training. As Christians, we don’t conform to the attitudes and behaviors of worldly culture, but instead we comply with the teachings of the Word.
 - **Psalm 119:133** – “Order my steps (conduct) in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.”
 - **2 Peter 3:11** – “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved (earthly possessions), what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation (behavior) and godliness.”

VIII. THE PURPOSE OF THE WORD – EQUIPPING US

- **2 Timothy 3:16-17** – “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

A. Verse seventeen of this chapter gives us the purpose for the four functions provided to us by the Word – that we may be thoroughly furnished (equipped) as productive workers in the kingdom of God. The Word equips or supplies us with all the necessary tools to become what God has called us to be. Some of the ways in which the Word equips us are listed below:

1. The Word is creative power.
 - **Psalm 33:6** – “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.”
 - **Hebrews 11:3** – “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God...”
2. The Word is saving power.
 - **1 Peter 1:23** – “Being born again, . . . by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”
 - **James 1:21** – “...receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”
3. The Word is healing power.
 - **Psalm 107:20** – “He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.”

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4. The Word is reviving power – quickening, giving life, revitalizing, reanimating power!
 - **Psalm 119:50** – “This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.”
5. The Word is cleansing power – purifying, purging power.
 - **John 15:3** – “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.”
 - **John 17:17** – “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. “
 - **Jeremiah 23:29** – “Is not my word like as a (purifying) fire? saith the Lord . . . ?”
6. The Word is judging power.
 - **John 12:48** – (Jesus said) “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.
7. The Word is a destroying hammer – defeating the enemies of righteousness.
 - **Jeremiah 23:29** – “Is not my word like as a . . . hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?”
8. The Word is a lamp – lighting our way, illuminating the way in which we should live.
 - **Psalm 119:105** – “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”
9. The Word is Jesus Christ in written manifestation.
 - **John 1:14** – “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”
10. The Word is nourishing food.
 - **1 Peter 2:2** – “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.”
 - **Hebrews 6:5** – “And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.”
11. The Word is a stumbling block to unbelievers.
 - **1 Peter 2:8** – “...even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient...”
12. The Word is spiritual knowledge.
 - **Proverbs 2:5-6** – “Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.”
 - **John 5:39** – (Jesus said) “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”
13. The Word inspires faith.
 - **Romans 10:17** – “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”
 - **John 20:31** – “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”
14. The Word is a powerful spiritual weapon – the Sword of the Spirit.

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- **Ephesians 6:17** – “And take . . . the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”
- **Hebrews 4:12** – “For the word of God is quick (alive), and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

IX. WHAT ATTITUDE SHOULD I HAVE TOWARD THE BIBLE?

- A. Obey the Word. Comply to, conform to, observe, obey, and follow the scriptures.
- **James 1:22** – “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only...”
 - **Psalm 119:9** – “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.” (taking heed: attending to, observing, conforming, obeying)
- B. Respect the Word of God. Treat it with awe, honor and deference. Glorify the Word. (Glorify: to give honor, to render esteem)
- **Psalm 119:161** – “Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word.”
 - **Acts 13:48** – “And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”
- C. Receive the Word openly. Have a willing, eager and zealous heart to take in the Word.
- **James 1:21** – “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”
 - **Acts 17:11** – “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”
- D. Hide the Word in your heart. Memorize portions of it and learn selected verses “by heart.”
- **Psalm 119:11** – “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”
- E. Study the Word. Research it and examine it carefully.
- **2 Timothy 2:15** – “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”
- F. Allow the Word to dwell or live in you. Let its truths and principles become part of your nature and character.
- **Colossians 3:16** – “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”
- G. Delight in the Word. Allow the Word to become your “pleasure,” your enjoyment, your cherished and valuable treasure.
- **Psalm 119:16** – “I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.”
 - **Psalm 1:2** – “But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.”
- H. Love the Word. Have great affection and passion for the Word of God.

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- *Psalm 119:97* – “O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.”
 - *Psalm 119:140* – “Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.”
- I. Meditate on the Word. Meditating is thinking and rethinking each thought until it becomes your thought. Meditation is best accomplished by committing verses to memory.
- *Joshua 1:8* – “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”
 - *Psalm 119:97* – “O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.”
- J. Combine Bible reading with prayer. Prayer is helpful in the process of transplanting the Word into our heart, our inner man.
- *Acts 6:4* – “But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”
- K. Teach the Word. Instruct and educate others in the scriptures.
- *2 Timothy 2:2* – “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”
- L. Apply the Word – utilize what you learn from the Word of God by putting it to use in your life.
- *James 1:22-25* – “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass (mirror): For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”
- M. Develop the habit of reading the Word daily. The Bible is our spiritual “daily bread.” It is advisable to begin reading in the New Testament with the Book of Acts, the Gospels, and then the Epistles. From there you can expand your reading schedule to include the entire Bible.
- There are numerous Bible reading programs that are structured to help you read through the entire Bible each year. For example, the Sunday School Division of the United Pentecostal Church publishes the B.R.E.A.D. (Bible Reading Enriches Any Day) program. There are also one-year Bibles that have a prescribed daily reading selection to accomplish the same goal.

X. HOW DO I STUDY THE BIBLE?

- A. The word “study”, as used 2 Timothy 2:15, is the Greek word “*spoudazo*” which means to give diligence, to labor, to make effort. Studying the Word of God means more than just casually reading it. We are instructed to carefully examine and inspect it.
1. True Bible study calls for discipline. Paul compliments the Bereans in Acts 17 because they diligently searched the scriptures to discover God’s truth.
- *Acts 17:11* – “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readi-

*When You Read the Bible Through
I supposed I knew my Bible,
Reading piecemeal, hit or miss,
Now a bit of John or Matthew,
Now a snatch of Genesis,
Certain chapters of Isaiah,
Certain psalms (the twenty-third),
Twelfth of Romans,
First of Proverbs,
Yes, I thought I knew the Word!
But I found that thorough reading
Was a different thing to do,
And the way was unfamiliar
When I read the Bible through.
You who like to play at Bible,
Dip and dabble, here and there,
Just before you kneel, aweary,
And yawn through a hurried prayer;
You who treat the Crown of Writings
As you treat no other book—
Just a paragraph disjointed,
Just a crude impatient look—
Try a worthier procedure,
Try a broad and steady view;
You will kneel in very rapture
When you read the Bible through!*

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ness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

2. A casual reading of the Bible, reading a verse here or there, or skipping from thought to thought, are poor study habits and will not produce much fruit or genuine knowledge of the Bible. We need to carefully and systematically study, scrutinize and examine the scriptures.
 - **John 5:39** – “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”
- B. Studying the Word is a commandment of God. Studying God’s Word is both a privilege and a duty.
 - **2 Timothy 2:15** – “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”
- C. Studying the Word of God protects us from false doctrines. Scripture warns us that false prophets and false beliefs will threaten to corrupt and defile us.
 - **2 Corinthians 11:3-4** – “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.
 - **2 Timothy 3:13** – “But evil men and seducers shall wax (grow) worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.”
 - **2 Timothy 4:3** – “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.”
- D. Studying the Word helps us to rightly divide (correctly interpret) the Word of truth. The term “divide” as used in this passage means “to cut straight.” Paul, possibly referring to his occupation as a tentmaker, understood the necessity of good workmanship and cutting straight any material that was to be joined together.
 1. We are commanded to “rightly divide” the Word of truth. We must be very careful not to force our own interpretation upon scriptures.
 - **2 Peter 3:16** – “As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.”
 - a. The word “wrest” is from the Greek word “*strebloo*” which means to wrench, to twist or dislocate, to pervert, warp or distort
 - b. Some people argue with scripture and “wrest” it, trying to make it mean something different than what it truly says. Some distort the scriptures to mean what they want them to mean.
 - c. We must note that wresting or twisting scriptures from their true meaning will lead us to destruction.
 - **Deuteronomy 4:2** – “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.”
 - **Revelation 22:18-19** – “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this

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prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

- E. The infilling of the Holy Ghost helps us understand God’s Word.
- **1 Corinthians 2:13-14** – *“Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”*

XI. HELPFUL TOOLS FOR STUDYING THE BIBLE

- A. A study Bible, preferably the King James or the New King James version, is a wise investment. Both *The Thompson Chain Reference Bible* and *The Open Bible* contain many useful helps. Be aware that doctrine should be taken only from the actual text of the Bible and not from commentaries you find printed in various Bibles.
- B. The Amplified Bible is a translation that gives expanded definitions of every scripture in the Bible.

<i>King James Version</i>	<i>Amplified Version</i>
<i>Acts 2:38</i> – “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”	<i>Acts 2:38</i> – “And Peter answered them, Repent-- change your views, and purpose to accept the will of God in your inner selves instead of rejecting it-- and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of and release from your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

- C. Be careful not to rely upon “paraphrased” versions of the Bible. Paraphrased versions are not translations, and contain significant man-made changes to the original text.
- D. A Bible Concordance enables you to look up individual words and find out which scriptures contain that word. *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance* also gives the literal Greek and Hebrew definitions of every word in the Bible.
- E. A topical Bible, such as *Nave’s Topical Bible*, groups scriptures in subject or topic categories.
- F. A Bible commentary can be used for background or historical information. However, be careful about accepting doctrinal statements from Bible commentaries as they contain the author's opinions.
- G. Most Bibles and Bible reference books are available on computer software and “apps” for mobile devices. Many Bible tools, including Bible translations, are available for free on the Internet.

XII. CONCLUSION

- A. The Bible is the greatest tangible possession we can ever hold with our hands. It is God’s “love letter” written expressly to us!
- B. The Bible is an extraordinary miracle. It was miraculously inspired, miraculously created and has been miraculously preserved for us today.

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This Book is the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding; its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable.

Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you.

It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's character. Here paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed.

Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully, meditatively, searchingly, devotionally, and study it constantly, perseveringly, and industriously. Read it through and through until it becomes part of your being and generates faith that will move mountains. It is a mine of wealth, the source of health, and a river of pleasure.

It is given to you in this life, will be opened at the judgment, and will last forever. Follow its precepts and it will lead you to Calvary, to the empty tomb, to a resurrected life in Christ; yes, and even to glory itself, for eternity.

-Source Unknown

Additional reading material (available through the Pentecostal Publishing House):

God's Infallible Word, David Bernard

The Bible – Its Origin and Use, Word Aflame Publishing

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